

in the city boomed with the development of factories for processing the region's abundant natural resources such as wood products including lumber and naval stores, rice, cotton, and grains. Although beginning to slip in importance in the face of increased cotton production and less demand by the 1880s, naval stores still provided much of the surplus income to merchants, shippers, and distillers. Rice production began to fall by the wayside as the remainder of the nineteenth century progressed. Industrial manufacturing of fertilizer from imported guano prospered at nearby Navassa and other plants.⁴⁵



Wilmington wharf about 1870

Image Courtesy of the North Carolina Collection, UNC-CH

the railroads of Wilmington, see Charles Kernan, *Rails to Weeds*, (Wilmington: Wilmington Railroad Museum, 1988), 3-15, and Evans, *Ballots and Fence Rails*, 185-192.

⁴⁵ Timber and naval stores interests also began to feel the effects of deforestation as the pine forests disappeared. For more information on Wilmington's economy before and after the Civil War, see Alan D. Watson, *Wilmington Port of North Carolina*, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1992). *Directory of the City of Wilmington, North Carolina, 1889* (Julius A. Bonitz Publisher: Wilmington, NC, 1889) For information on the naval stores and timber industries, see Outland, *Tapping the Pines*.

After the Civil War, the working white population grew at a rate similar to that of the merchant class, mostly due to the influx of new residents from the North, overseas, and the surrounding countryside, all seeking employment. Wilmington employers encouraged migration to the city through the Southern Immigration Society. To entice immigrants, the society opened an agency in Wilmington during 1867 and 1868 and helped to fix wages of immigrants and extended credit to assist with relocation. One employer, F. W. Foster and Company, opened an office in Wilmington in 1865 and brought 37 German laborers to the city.⁴⁶ Just as laboring whites competed with free blacks before the war, similar competition remained after occupation ended. Wilmington experienced a small boom by 1870, fueled by profitable shipping and commerce in naval stores and cotton. The city's wage earners brought home much more money than they did in 1860 even though there was more competition from new residents of the city. By 1870, only about 15 percent of Wilmington's wage earners were employed in well-paying manufacturing jobs.⁴⁷ The other poor white workers were in a difficult position since they had to compete with a large free black population that included a large number of skilled workers. A distinct area within Wilmington developed to accommodate the poor whites and immigrants. Called "Dry Pond" by residents because of low-lying areas, the section was in the southern part of town and was characterized by small homes

⁴⁶ Ruark, "Some Phases of Reconstruction," 103-104.

⁴⁷ In 1870, New Hanover led the state for high wages since its wage earners were paid an average of \$445.68 annually whereas statewide, the wages for this class dropped to \$161.19, lower than the prewar level. Of the 5,292 males over the ages of 18 of all races in New Hanover, only 822 were employed in manufacturing trades. Historical Census Browser Retrieved 1/5/2005, from the University of Virginia, Geospatial and Statistical Data Center.